

Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A pressure device for applying pressure to the whole of the chest area of
a patient and for reducing the movement and dehesis of the sternum
and chest incision after open heart and chest surgeries comprising:
 - a. a casing substantially in the form of a pillow, the casing having
opposing lateral sides, a back side for application against the chest
of the patient, the back side having top corners, a frontal side
substantially on the opposite side of the back side of the casing,
the frontal side having a top attachment portion and a bottom
attachment portion,
 - b. a membrane layer attached to the top attachment portion and the
bottom attachment portion of the frontal side of the casing, the
outer wall of the frontal side and the inner wall of the membrane
layer forming a sleeve for receiving the hands and forearms of a
patient,
 - c. a contiguous strap attached to the top corners of the back side for
attachment of the casing around the neck of the patient for
immediate proximity of the pressure device to the patient's chest
incision area, and
 - d. a gripping handle, for the patient to grab with their hands.
2. The pressure device of claim 1 wherein the gripping handle comprises
first and second handle portions, said first and second handle portions
being positioned on the opposing lateral sides of the casing.
3. The pressure device of claim 1 wherein the gripping handle is at least 2
inches thick so that the patient can grip the gripping handle.
4. The pressure device of claim 1 wherein the pillow is at least 3 inches thick
so that the patient can grab the gripping handle.

5. The pressure device of claim 1 wherein the pillow is at approximately 4.5 inches thick so that the patient can grab the gripping handle.
6. The pressure device of claim 1 wherein the gripping handle is contoured to receive the fingers of the patient.
- 5 7. The pressure device of claim 1 wherein the contiguous strap has a cam buckle for adjustable positioning of the pressure device over the patient's chest area.
8. The pressure device of claim 1 further comprising an accessory pocket for easy storage of objects.
- 10 9. The pressure device of claim 1 wherein the plane of the frontal side and the plane of the back side are substantially parallel to each other.
10. The pressure device of claim 1 further comprising a heating apparatus positioned in close proximity to the back side of the casing.
11. The pressure device of claim 10 wherein the heating apparatus
15 substantially has the same surface area as the back side of the casing.
12. The pressure device of claim 1 further comprising a cooling apparatus positioned in close proximity to the back side of the casing.
13. The pressure device of claim 12 wherein the cooling apparatus
substantially has the same surface area as the back side of the casing.
- 20 14. A method of reducing the movement and dehesis of the sternum and chest incision of a patient after open heart and chest surgeries comprising:
 - a. placing a pressure device on the chest area of the patient, the pressure device having a casing substantially in the form of a
25 pillow, the casing having opposing lateral sides, each lateral side having a gripping handle,
 - b. supporting the casing around the neck of the patient, for positioning the pressure device in the immediate proximity of the patient's chest incision area,

- c. hugging the pressure device by crossing the forearms over the pressure device and gripping the gripping handles on the opposing lateral sides, and
- d. exerting pressure on the pressure device for reducing the movement and dehesis of the sternum.

15. The method of claim 14 further comprising the patient applying pressure across the chest surface area from the lateral side to the frontal side of the casing.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein pressure is applied across the chest surface area from the lateral side to the frontal side of the casing by pressing down the elbows of the patient towards the chest area using the latissimus dorsi muscles.

17. The method of claim 14 further comprising adjustable positioning of the pressure device over the patient's chest area.

18. The method of claim 14 wherein the chest area of the patient is heated.

19. The method of claim 14 wherein the chest area of the patient is cooled.

20. A method of expediting fusion of the cut sternum bone after open heart and chest surgeries comprising:

- a. placing a pressure device on the chest area of the patient, the pressure device having a casing substantially in the form of a pillow, the casing having opposing lateral sides, each lateral side having a gripping handle,
- b. supporting the casing around the neck of the patient for positioning the pressure device in the immediate proximity of the patient's chest incision area,
- c. hugging the pressure device by crossing the forearms over the pressure device and gripping the gripping handles on the opposing lateral sides, and
- d. exerting pressure on the pressure device for reducing the movement and dehesis of the sternum.

21. The method of claim 20 wherein the hands and forearms are inserted through a sleeve.

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